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Massey University Cuts a Third of Science

New Zealand Association of Scientists President and University of Waikato Professor Troy Baisden says, “The scope of the cuts to Massey University’s science capability is beyond alarming.”

“Up to 40% of taught papers and about a third of academic staff in the sciences are on the chopping block in proposed changes, with little difference between two proposed options. Although almost all qualifications are preserved in some form, many would only be available to the Auckland campus via distance learning – leaving empty shells of what exists now.”

“Cuts of this scale threaten New Zealand’s future, because science is fundamental to both the innovative technologies of the future, and to protecting New Zealand’s economy and environment as we work through big issues including water and climate change.”

“If limited only to Massey, these cuts are a spectacular own goal, and a tragedy for staff. They may be a gift to competing institutions, at a perfect time for students to enrol elsewhere next year.”

“There are deeper reasons to worry, not least of which is the lack of support for, and understanding of, the pandemic’s impact on the university sector’s capability, morale, and stability.”

“If we as a nation gut our science capability and reputation at a time when top talent wants to live and work in New Zealand, we’ll risk being left behind intellectually and economically for decades to come.”

A month ago, Labour list candidate [Dr Ayesha Verrall said](#) her party’s and the Government’s policy on science and the pandemic is, “investment, not austerity.” Massey’s cuts are the opposite, and we now need to hear from politicians in the election about how they will value science and technology for our future.

“New Zealand needs to consider whether science and scientists should be just another tool following the shifting sands of policies and economics, or should be a beacon leading us through pandemics and climate change to visions and economies of the future. Now is the time for a serious review of the future expectations for research, science and technology in New Zealand before Massey embarks on their regrettable plans.”

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